

# Social Studies Disciplinary Practices

Disciplinary practices are the skills that individuals who work in the field of social sciences use on a regular basis. Because the purpose of social studies is to provide students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes they need to be active, informed, responsible individuals and contributing members of their communities, many of the practices can be applied to daily life. Curriculum writers and educators will want to consider how they can design learning experiences that will enable their students to develop these skills in conjunction with the content knowledge reflected in the core ideas and performance expectations (Citizens, 2008). Each disciplinary practice below is accompanied by sample performance expectations that illustrate each of the practices.

## Developing Questions and Planning Inquiry



Developing insightful questions and planning effective inquiry involves identifying the purposes of different questions to understand the human experience, which requires addressing real world issues. Inquiries incorporating questions from various social science disciplines build understanding of the past, present and future; these inquiries investigate the complexity and diversity of individuals, groups, and societies.

- 6.1.2.HistorySE.3: Use historical data from a variety of sources to **investigate the development of a local community** (e.g., origins of its name, originating members, important historical events and places).
- 6.1.5.GeoPP.5: Describe **how the migration and settlement patterns of Native American groups impacted different regions** of the Western Hemisphere.

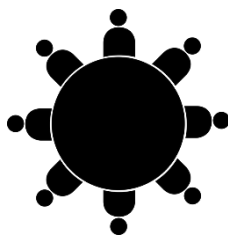
## Gathering and Evaluating Sources



Finding, evaluating and organizing information and evidence from multiple sources and perspectives are the core of inquiry. Effective practice requires evaluating the credibility of primary and secondary sources, assessing the reliability of information, analyzing the context of information, and corroborating evidence across sources. Discerning opinion from fact and interpreting the significance of information requires thinking critically about ourselves and the world.

- 6.1.2.HistoryCC.1: **Use multiple sources** to create a chronological sequence of events that describes how and why your community has changed over time.
- 6.1.5.GeoGI.1: **Use multiple sources** to evaluate the impact of the movement of people from place to place on individuals, communities, and regions.

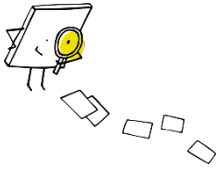
## Seeking Diverse Perspectives



Making sense of research findings requires thinking about what information is included, whether the information answers the question, and what may be missing, often resulting in the need to complete additional research. Developing an understanding of our own and others' perspectives builds understanding about the complexity of each person and the diversity in the world. Exploring diverse perspectives assists students in empathizing with other individuals and groups of people; quantitative and qualitative information provides insights into specific people, places, and events, as well as national, regional, and global trends.

- 6.1.2.HistoryUP.1: Use primary sources **representing multiple perspectives** to compare and make inferences about why there are different accounts of the same event.
- 6.1.5.HistorySE.1: Examine **multiple accounts** of early European explorations of North America including major land and water routes, reasons for exploration, and the impact the exploration had.

## Developing Claims and Using Evidence



Developing claims requires careful consideration of evidence, logical organization of information, self-awareness about biases, application of analysis skills, and a willingness to revise conclusions based on the strength of evidence. Using evidence responsibly means developing claims based on factual evidence, valid reasoning, and a respect for human rights.

- 6.1.2.CivicsPR.2: **Cite evidence** that explains why rules and laws in school and communities are needed.
- 6.1.5.GeoHE.2: **Cite examples** of how technological advances have changed the environment in New Jersey and the United States (e.g., energy, transportation, communications).

## Presenting Arguments and Explanations



Using a variety of formats designed for a purpose and an authentic audience forms the basis for clear communication. Strong arguments contain claims with organized evidence and valid reasoning that respects the diversity of the world and the dignity of each person. Writing findings and engaging in civil discussion with an audience provides a key step in the process of thinking critically about conclusions and continued inquiry.

- 6.1.2.HistoryCA.1: **Make an evidence-based argument** about how and why communities change over time (e.g., locally, nationally, globally).
- 6.1.5.HistoryCA.1: **Craft an argument**, supported with historical evidence, for how demographics (i.e., race, gender, and economic status) affected social, economic, and political opportunities during the Colonial era.

## Engaging in Civil Discourse and Critiquing Conclusions



Assessing and refining conclusions through metacognition, further research, and deliberative discussions with diverse perspectives sharpens the conclusions and improves thinking as a vital part of the process of sensemaking. Responsible citizenship requires respectfully listening to and critiquing claims by analyzing the evidence and reasoning supporting them. Listening to and understanding contrary views can deepen learning and lay the groundwork for seeking consensus.

- 6.1.2.CivicsPD.1: **Engage in discussions** effectively by asking questions, considering facts, listening to the ideas of others, and sharing opinions.
- 6.3.5.GeoGI.1: Use technology to **collaborate with others who have different perspectives** to examine global issues, including climate change and propose possible solutions.

## Taking Informed Action



After thoroughly investigating questions, taking informed action means building consensus about possible actions and planning strategically to implement change. Democracy requires citizens to practice discussion, negotiation, coalition-seeking, and peaceful conflict resolution. When appropriate, taking informed action involves creating and/or implementing action plans designed to solve problems and create positive change.

- 6.3.2.CivicsPD.1: With adult guidance and support, **bring awareness of a local issue to school and/or community members** and make recommendations for change.
- 6.3.5.CivicsPD.3: **Propose a solution** to a local issue after considering evidence and the perspectives of different groups, including community members and local officials.